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Editorial

This is the first issue of ISC since the change of government and although Labour may not be going far enough or fast enough for some of us, at least now we have the feeling that we are pushing against an open government door regarding some of the issues that concern ISC. Freedom of Information, for example, is now on the political agenda. Labour will also do more to help refugees and asylum seekers, who were the subject of our recent conference.

This summer 1997 edition of Information for Social Change kicks off with an article by Kathleen Ladizesky on publishing in post Communist times in the Former Yugoslavia. This paper was presented at the Information for Social Change / Link Up conference held at the Overseas Development Institute in London on 14th June 1997. The rest of the papers from this conference will be published in ISC 6 later this year.

Our second feature article is Librarians in Opposition by Erwin Marks. This documents the little known story of resistance to National Socialism by library and information workers in Nazi Germany. This article was translated into English by Mr Rustam Davar.

Our third main presentation is Martyn Lowe's attempt to redefine radical information work. This is a timely piece, as there are moves afoot to network radical information groups worldwide. Raimund Dehmlow has produced a Directory of Progressive Librarians Around the World, which includes Information for Social Change.

Charles Willett, who produces Librarians at Liberty, has now edited the first issue of Counterpoise. This includes contributions from several ISC members. ISC has also been invited to attend a conference of radical librarians which is being organised in Washington next year by the Social Responsibilities Round Table as part of the American Library Association conference. Both the Directory and Counterpoise are reviewed in the A Riot to Read section of this ISC.

ISC is also part of a wider network of progressive organisations, some of which are listed in our Fellow Travellers section. With this issue we start a new series on the practical problems of information work that are faced within campaigning bodies.

In between the articles you will find testimonials and reviews of ISC from organisations like EIDOS, the Morning Star, Booksellers for Social Responsibility and the Public Library Journal. You will also find a number of graphics produced by Martyn Lowe.

John Pateman

Publishing in Post Communist Times in the Former Yugoslavia

(This paper was given at the Information for Social Change / Link conference, "People Without Places", which was held at the Overseas Development Institute, London, on 14 June 1997)

Introduction

When I saw the title of this conference, "People without places", I wondered if there may be some way to link in the dilemma of countries which had been "exiled" from their system of government as when the Communist order collapsed in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It was agreed that the topic may be interesting and this paper on libraries, publication and distribution in the Former Yugoslavia, the country which has probably seen the most upheaval and fragmentation, is the result.

The area has long suffered political disturbances and the Serb/Croat struggles are not new. Since the 1920's the country of Yugoslavia had existed as a monarchy which in 1945 became a Communist Republic, headed by Tito. After his death in 1980, the country continued as one entity until 1989. At this time five countries are in existence : Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Yugoslavia now divided into Montenegro and Serbia which is further delineated into Serbia proper plus the autonomous provinces of Kosova and Vojvodina.

Problems in this area are highly complex but on a simplistic note, once the communist centre had gone the underlying cultural and religious differences which had been kept under control came back to the top. Many violations have taken place including damage to libraries and publications, and enormous destruction has been seen in Sarajevo. Publication has been in a state of disarray affecting libraries not only in the region but even the acquisition process in the West, where librarians have also had their own problems of budgetary cuts.

This paper notes some of the problems being faced and ways which are evolving to try to overcome them. It mentions use of present day technological advances which are taking place at speed. Libraries not only have to come to terms with and manage the changes in the countries which have evolved but also have to take on the whole new aspect of technology, alongside funding problems.

Effect of war on libraries in FY

Many libraries have been irreparably damaged in the fighting in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In particular the National & University Library in Sarejevo was destroyed by artillery action in August 1992. The destruction has been carried out to try to eliminate any trace of religious belief, linguistic differences and ethnic origins.

Librarians world-wide were troubled by these deliberate attacks which destroyed manuscripts which can never be replaced. The background to this trouble was outlined in an article written by Sava Peic (1). In several countries funds are being collected and materials donated, so that when the troubles have eventually been resolved there will be a repository of money and stock waiting to reconstruct as much as possible (2).

However, in August 1996 an article in the New York Times said that although lofty promises were made for international funding to rebuild the Library together with its roads, airports and factories the amount so far supplied falls far short of that envisioned with the signing of the Dayton peace agreement.

Simple and practical plans are in progress within the country to restore basic library services to the people of Sarajevo who have been intellectually and professionally starved during the fighting. The city has lent a wing of the unused Marshall Tito army barracks in which to start housing donated books as well as surviving materials. Finance to create on-line services, open research facilities and create new collections is being looked for.

The more exotic idea of restoring the old library will be deferred until later and only minimal work to ensure that the ruins do not completely disappear have been carried out. Many people think that although these ruins have an emotive function they should be preserved as a remembrance and the new Sarajevo library should be a modern functional building which the whole world should help to provide (3).

In spite of the difficulty of acquisition, the British Library has collected a wide range of printed material relating to the war in Bosnia and reflecting many different points of view. It includes over 100 titles published in Sarajevo during the siege which are listed on Portico the British Library website <http://portico.bl.uk/>. In attempting to acquire works which will provide insight into current political, economic and cultural developments, the British Library follows in the footsteps of their nineteenth-century predecessors who, far from wishing to create a 'museum of the book' selected material which would provide, for their present and future readers, insight into life in foreign countries (4).

I will now look at some of the developments in Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia about which there is some accurate information from our own work experiences in Slavonic Acquisitions at BLDS and also from a US Library Report (5).

Croatia

Agents and publishers

Changes in the Croatian book industry have severely affected agents. Since 1991, privatisation has led to a reduction in the total number of monographs published in Croatia each year. The bigger publishing houses have privatised, leaving only a skeleton work force. The Soros Foundation has given monetary support for the publication of Croatian books falling into all of the following categories : non-partisan, not pro-government, not a sure commercial success, but likely to be read. 40% of books entered for such funding were supported.

Previously a discount of up to 30% was given by agents but this has now narrowed to as little as 5% or done away with altogether. Also, because a large part of the Serbo-Croatian market has been lost due to the war, print runs on Croatian books have decreased and prices are high.

Mladost, the former state publishers and distribution agents, has undergone major changes in the past two years, particularly in the loss of personnel, but plans are progressing for major improvements in their operations. Mladost has now introduced PCs in the workplace and a catalogue of new books has been produced. They supply individuals, bookstores and libraries abroad (Sweden, Australia, Canada, USA) but search efforts, purchasing, handling, and postage are costly for Mladost and it appears that they prefer doing wholesale business. Mladost is not familiar with blanket orders and although they may be willing to supply items as they are published with the option of having them returned they do not like this form of business. One area where Mladost can still compete effectively is in subscriptions of Croatian periodicals. Formerly Mladost published 250 titles a year but by 1994 they published less than ten.

Books Trade and Services (BTS) was formed in 1992 with nine employees moving over from Mladost, a point which they used in introducing their new business to possible users. BTS hopes to provide a better and faster service and like customers to know that it is the youngest company with the longest experience. BTS tries to maintain low prices and quick supply and is not unwilling to carry out labour-intensive work. In 1994 the company estimated that it then had about 40% of the book export-import market in Croatia. Where demand for certain titles is anticipated multiple copies are purchased.

BTS exports materials to Kubon & Sagner (K & S), and as an importer it is the Croatian National Library's main supplier of non-Croatian publications. BTS can supply libraries with xerox copies of any book held by the Croatian National Library. They too are reluctant to supply blanket orders and have no experience in this.

Private specialist booksellers often emerge from employment as a larger concern. One such is the Antiquarian Bookseller Mr Nedjko Dominovi formerly employed by Matica Hrvatska. Once established, the specialists supply the needs of other general agents. Operating on a smaller scale, work may be carried out from home or small office with stock in various outlying stores. Such small businessmen are interested in doing business in the West if the possibility arises.

High quality scientific journals such as ITA , Informacija Telekomunikacije Antomati from Zagreb, Croatia are now competing for international recognition.

Libraries

At this point a word about exchange of publications may be useful. This used to be a common method of acquisition between libraries in the communist countries and the West which is now being phased out for various reasons as purchase is now preferred. Problems are being reported in the exchange programmes as institutions in Western Europe e.g. Britain, Holland and Italy, are finding that the rising cost of publications at home make it difficult to maintain the balance of exchange agreements as was done in the past.

The Library of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences (HAZU) has a good network of exchange agreements and little foreign material is purchased.

Although the library is keeping up with developments and is connected to the mail network, recent budgets have fallen. Their best recent publications have been joint efforts between HAZU and commercial publishers : HAZU lending its name to these ventures and the publisher its money. Under these arrangements HAZU receives 200 copies of each title.

The National and University Library (NSB) shows a different pattern to HAZU in its methods of obtaining American and European titles. It gets only 25% on exchange and 75% is purchased. There is evidence of a new public interest for Croatian materials and a special fund has been established to help with exchange as a means of disseminating the books abroad.

Before 1991 NSB received 15 depository copies of each Croatian book. However the Croatian publishers now only supply 6 deposit copies to NSB. Some publishers do not want to supply any deposit copies.

Formerly the Library's stock was concentrated on humanities but, since independence over the past two years as part of a centralising trend, NSB has been expected to include the natural sciences in its acquisitions. Earlier, collecting in these subjects had been carried out by the University's science departments. In 1994 NSB saw an increase by 30% in users. This appears to be because the library has begun to acquire more relevant materials for users. Recently new acquisitions lists have been sent to academic departments which must have

added to the increase in users. A new library building which was scheduled to open in 1995 has open book stacks. The Library gives credit to recent progress in the Library to the generosity of Croatian emigres and their organisations.

Slovenia

Agents and publishers

DZS is one of the three largest and oldest book agents in the country. Their present supply of materials to the West is slowing down as the older generation of Slovene-speaking immigrants dies out. However, interest from libraries has increased, and demand from individual customers appears to be steady. DZS is K & S's supplier of Slovene materials. Throughout the region K & S are look upon as esteemed booksellers.

DZS, like other firms in Slovenia in the early 1990s, underwent a process of restructuring to try and eliminate labour-intensive and low priority activities. Under new ownership the firm's main aim has moved towards the generating of profits.

In Slovenia, as in most other former communist countries, the massive government subsidies for publishing have diminished. The present priority of converting to the open market hampers funding for such cultural activities as libraries and publishing. Subsidies would help offset printing costs and author royalties, costs which are now reflected in high retail prices.

The standard of printing in Slovenia has been of a good quality and formerly some British publishers had printing done in Slovenia to cut down on costs. Since 1990 the process was reversed. For some time the cost of printing in Slovenia has been so high that DZS gets its printing done through a British firm with facilities in Hong Kong. They now think that prices are levelling out.

Publications from other countries of former Yugoslavia are not in big supply in Slovenia at this time but Serbo-Croat materials are still of interest and will be bound to come back into the market in the future.

Slovenian journals are some of the most expensive in Eastern Europe. This may be because the total population of the country is just 2 million (2,000,000) print runs are small and the market limited. At the same time these costs are contributed to by the high level of quality operated by Slovenian printers. It has been noticed that the public is turning more and more to libraries, with three to four times as many readers now registering at libraries compared with a few years ago.

In 1991 the level of publication was low but by 1993 the market was seen to be greatly improved and a recovery taking place. Since 1991 many new private publishers went into

business, some quickly disappearing. Existing business have tried to diversify by marketing other goods such as shoes or computers.

Libraries

National and University Library (NUK) in Ljubljana receives 30% of acquisitions on exchange with 70% purchased. The NUK receives around 6,000 English language monographs and 600 periodical titles annually. Unlike some other institutions and companies, in 1993 the Library could say that it has felt virtually no effects from the political and economic changes of the past four years, except that NUK has lost the right to depository copies from the other former Yugoslav republics. There do not appear to be problems with the system of legal depository copies, which NUK continues to receive unhampered. There is steady support in the Slovene Ministry of Culture for NUK's exchange program, even though it is universally agreed that the present time is not a favourable one for cultural institutions.

The NUK sees its primary aim in carrying out an exchange programme is to disseminate Slovene materials to libraries around the world. Although it receives materials as part of the exchange system anything it really needs is purchased. Since 1989-1991 NUK has been free to purchase directly from sources in Western Europe and the US. Some books and CD-ROMs are ordered directly from their publishers.

One of the greatest benefits that NUK can offer exchange partners is in the area of periodical subscriptions. The NUK can order most Slovene periodicals at domestic rates for exchange partners. This can save between 50% to 70% of what it would otherwise cost them to obtain these serials through a Slovenian vendor, not to mention vendors outside of Slovenia. Not all serials can be purchased by NUK at these domestic rates.

The Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences (SAZU) library has a highly efficient, automated exchange operation. However, over the past few years SAZU, like HAZU in Zagreb, has noticed a major reduction in the number of exchange titles received from partners in Eastern Europe, due to the tremendous financial difficulties in the region. Titles from Russia, Poland, Romania and Albania have shown the greatest drop. Recently some materials have been sent in microfiche format but this is not of use to SAZU as they have no microfiche reader to use those materials.

SAZU's publishing output has also declined in recent years causing some fear that a knock on effect will arise as exchange partners reduce their supply. The cost of printing in Slovenia has increased since 1991 while SAZU's publication print runs have declined and are less now than they were even in the 1960s and 1970s. Government support for SAZU has not increased and from 1995 SAZU may need to begin purchasing some titles although they prefer to operate exchange agreements.

The National Library of Slovenia has now agreed to begin contributing bibliographic records to WorldCat (The OCLC Online Union Catalogue). Records from 1989 to 1996 will be included. Vilenka Jakac-Bizjak, director of library programs, said that this event is very important and is delighted that OCLC is interested in Slovenian records online. A new library building is also being built and is expected to be operational in 1999.

The Institute of Information Science (IZUM) in Maribor has an interesting, fast loading web-page - <http://www.izum.si/>. A recent note in the LAR Library Technology supplement (6) says that Informations System of Information Resources in Slovenia (IFORS) project financed by the Slovenian Ministry of S & T aims to provide information about all computerised information resources in Slovenia. This service comes via IZUM

Several quality scientific journals are being published one of them being Informatica - an international Journal of Computing and Informatics published in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Macedonia

Publishers

Kultura is one of a few of the major socialist-era publishers, most of which have survived and have remained as strong players in the publishing industry (e.g., Mislja, Makedonska kniga, Kultura). Mr Baeovski, the Director, estimated that in 1994 there were 35 new publishers in Macedonia. With a small reading public of around 1,200,000 native Macedonia speakers print runs tend to be small, ranging from 1,000 -5,000 at most. Loss of government support has had a huge effect on prices and on publishing in general. Before 1990, up to 40% of finance came from the Ministry of Culture although in those days publishers generally published what they thought the government expected.

Libraries

The National and University Library Kliment Ohridski (NUB) have experienced many problems with the mail and some of NUB's shipments to exchange partners did not get through. The blockade against Macedonia by Serbia and Greece cut off Macedonia's main trade route through Thessaloniki and made surface mail difficult. Overseas air mail was the only feasible route for maintaining exchanges, given the blockade of their surface routes, but this was expensive. Frequently books are packed for dispatch but the budget does allow for them to be posted. To keep exchanges working it is helpful if foreign partners are able to subsidise postage. This may temporarily help the problem of materials leaving the country but the problem of incoming mail is still a difficulty. Incoming air mail may arrive but if materials are being sent by surface they way sit in Thessalonika indefinitely. As UN sanctions against Serbia fell the land links were easier.

Supply of legal deposit copies broke down in 1991 and is still in the process of restoration. Previously 12 copies of each item published in the federation (seven of which went to the national libraries throughout Yugoslavia) were received. Under the new Macedonian law, NUB will get five copies of each title. NUB is still responsible for compiling the Macedonian national bibliography which is issued in two series, one for monographs and the other for articles published in serials. Publication of the national bibliography, as of many institutional serial titles, has lagged in recent years. In December 1995 one series is current at 1993, the other still lags at 1991. NUB is interested in improving the quality of this publication.

The Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences (MANU) can offer only Academy publications on exchange and cannot meet requests to supply other Macedonian publications. Postage has become more expensive than the materials themselves. Some exchange partners have been dropped and the library staff has been reduced from eight employees to five. Like other academy libraries throughout the region, MANU has had to cut many paid subscriptions for Western periodicals and would welcome suggestions from partners that would help reinstate some of them.

Although MANU uses an e-mail link it is used only in case of emergency at this time because, not having its own link, a fee for each use is paid. Once they have their own Internet address this restriction will be dropped.

Yugoslavian titles

With the present political situation in Yugoslavia, Jugoslavenska Kniga DSC's main supplier in Belgrade is no longer able to supply many titles which they previously supplied up to 1992 which are published in the other countries. However, it should be mentioned that Jugoslavenska Kniga has continued to supply those publications that they can obtain throughout the troubles in their country and have often guided us to other suppliers when they could no longer provide the items required.

Direct purchase

When no other means of supply is forthcoming it is sometimes necessary to search for details of the publishers and write to try to verify the state of publication of certain serials. Having done the groundwork in tracing a publisher it is then often easiest to ask the publisher to supply the title and obtain it as a direct purchase. Obtaining titles by direct purchase is as time consuming as arranging exchange but it has the advantage of knowing what the cost is.

In the former Yugoslavia in particular we now obtain many items directly from the place of publication as after the troubles began this was the only way that supply could be secured.

Conclusion

While most of the former communist countries of USSR and Eastern Europe are facing difficulties, troubles in the territory which was Yugoslavia have been particularly extreme. In the field of publication the large state publishing houses have been drastically reduced and smaller private companies, often using staff previously employed in the government business, have arisen and the price of publications has increased. The amount of publication is now much reduced and print runs are smaller. The high quality printing to be found in eg Croatia is now sometimes being sent to the Far East where it can be done more cheaply. Although some aid has been forthcoming (eg from Soros) it has not made a large impact.

This, together with the reduction of funding in libraries, has made acquisition of materials difficult. In former Yugoslavia the deposit of large numbers of books for use in exchange agreements has been considerably reduced. Discount of books has also been reduced or eliminated. Decreased funding of libraries in the West has also played its part and it is more difficult to justify purchase or supply items for exchange. On top of these problems, the sanctions and blockade imposed by the West and other countries have made many difficulties for acquisition of materials from the Former Yugoslavia.

On the positive side there are now a number of small publishers producing good quality materials especially in Croatia and Slovenia. Agents have streamlined their services and libraries are adjusting to the changes in acquisitions and readership demands. The flow of information between the region and the west was seriously curtailed for a while but there are signs that a new order is being established.

Kathleen Ladizesky

Slavonic Acquisitions, The British Library, Reader Services & Collections Development,
Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7BQ

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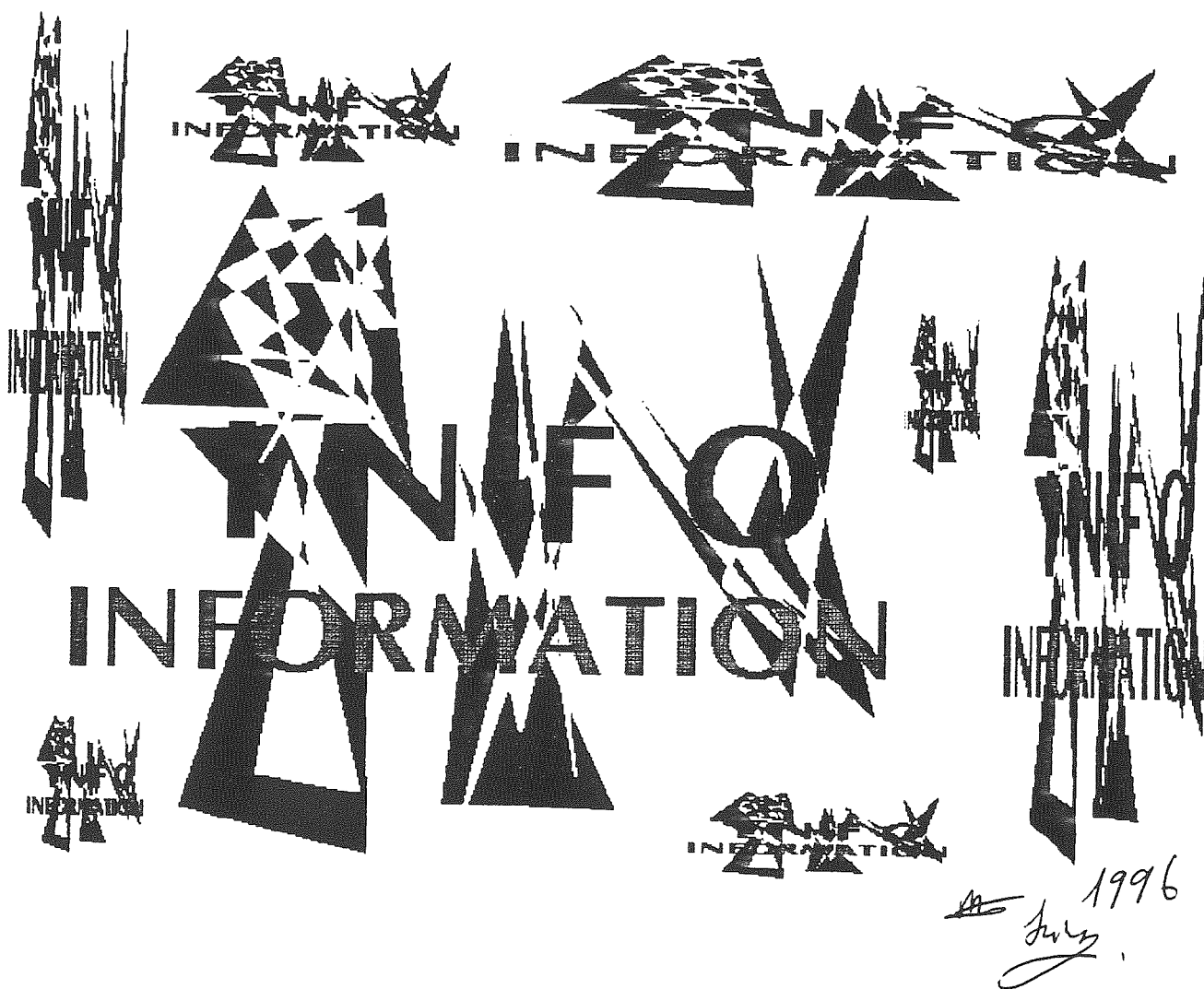
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Librarians In Opposition

It is frequently claimed that from amongst its personnel ranks, librarianship in Germany offered little effective resistance to National Socialism. This is not untrue. Many librarians even approved of Nazi Kulturpolitik and gave it their support which facilitated the integration of the library systems into the National Socialists' system of control. Almost every famous spokesperson for the profession willingly enforced, at first organisationally and later ideologically, the Gleichschaltung -or the policy of forced conformity. This was as a result of either political ignorance, careful calculation, being simply terrified into compliance, or ambitious, personal motives. This is not however, the full picture.

In addition to general conformity and zealous sycophancy, there was measured resistance, solidarity and a readiness to help dismissed colleagues, there was also hidden resistance by failing to comply with, or damaging editions of, official rules. The cleansing of the profession, regarded by many as excessive, was carried out slowly and with reluctance. There was however, also defiant revolt and even resistance, which ultimately resulted in the persecution of librarians with different opinions. Many librarians paid the price for their courageous stance -their basic humanist, anti-fascist conviction- by being forced into emigration, being imprisoned, sent to concentration camps or even to the gallows. This aspect of predominantly politically oriented resistance to the Nazi dictatorship by members of the profession, has been largely overlooked by most accounts of the profession written to date. It has remained chiefly unexposed, neglected in an excessive manner and even omitted. Librarians however, who individually or collectively were involved in political resistance against the demons which invaded Germany and her libraries in 1933, deserve greater recognition than that which they have received until now.

The extent of the influence which the Nazi's seizing of power had on librarians' lives can be judged by the example of events which took place in early 1933 at the public library in Breslau. Three leading librarians -Klose, Maiwald and Moering- known as opponents of Hitler were dismissed immediately. Their subsequent fates were as follows: The proven library historian and fervent democrat Dr. Alfred Klose, lost not only the field of activity entrusted to him, but also his secure livelihood, and was forced thus to struggle on in a field of work alien to him. Librarian George Maiwald, member of the German Communist Party (KPD), began illegal political activities. After being arrested, he survived torture at the hands of the Nazis and was later able to flee abroad, settling finally in South America. As for library director Licentiate Ernst Moering, a very influential Christian politician whose particular interest was in educational matters, he was detained at the beginning of February 1933 by the Brownshirts for being one of their most prominent opponents. They placed a jester's cap upon the head of this commendable man and lead him through the Breslau streets so dressed. Nothing is known of his fate thereafter,

The events which took place in the Silesian capital during the National Socialists' first year of dictatorship, were reflected in various forms throughout other German cities. This period will forever remain the darkest chapter in the history of Germany's libraries,

Furthermore, we should not forget the fate of our Jewish colleagues, who suffered en masse firstly social exclusion, then persecution and finally extermination. In recent years many historical accounts from libraries have given this horrific event much consideration and have investigated it in detail. The profession as a whole lost not only some of its most talented members, but also suffered overall castigation, and was thereby integrated into the dictatorial framework of the National Socialists. With respect to the conformist attitude adopted by the majority of those in the profession it has become apparent since 1970, even in German specialist publications, that there were also significantly different attitudes. If one chooses not to regard this later date as an indicator of a post-1945 suppressed guilt complex, it at least then points towards a trauma which events from the National Socialist era have left behind. This was limited also mainly by the 'New Beginning' in the West German zone, led by exactly the same people, in the same positions still who, whilst having criticised National Socialism did not risk their livelihoods to do so at any point.

By comparison, in the Soviet occupation zone developments took a different course. Here, it was the librarians who had been controlled according to Nazi regulations, or those who had been persecuted, which were successful -with the support of the occupying forces- in obtaining the top positions once the library system was rebuilt. The experiences which had been gained from their illegal struggle and living under the shadow of the gallows, bred within them a new, anti-fascist, democratic understanding for the job. This meant that they were ideally suited for the radical changes which a new socio-political beginning, greeted by them, presented. These experiences also formed the basis during the late 40's and early 50's on which libraries made political decisions. Attitudes towards librarianship during the National Socialist era were for this reason far more impartial and open than in West Germany. They distinguished themselves by ruthless, though at times indiscriminate criticism, and simultaneously by painful self-directed criticism -the experiences and grief of those involved. One saw oneself and those directly involved as fully justified -part of a historically acknowledged twelve year political battle against National Socialism. It was from this that a new claim to political leadership derived its legitimacy.

At the beginning the anti-fascist activities and plans of action, supported by the allies, were influential in both parts of Germany. In the West zone there were also librarians who, as maltreated persons or victims of National Socialism, were heavily involved with the democratic rebuilding process. For this, Eugen Sulz in Essen, Erwin Ackerknecht in Ludwigsburg, Robert Kohlstadt in Saarbriicken or of course, the hardened resister Gottlieb Branz in Munich should be remembered. On the other hand the leading anti-fascist librarians in the Soviet-occupied zone relied to a considerable extent upon qualified personnel which had not been corrupted by the Nazis, or who as former companions wanted an honest, new

beginning. It would not have been possible, in East or West, to have overcome the problems posed by bringing the library system back in order by any other means.

The process of dissociation began with the political division of Germany in 1947/48, when it became apparent that the National Socialist past was to be dealt with in differing ways. In the Federal Republic the process of dissociation from the products of the National Socialist library politics continued for longer, particularly with respect to those who had been racially persecuted and the looting of East European libraries which had occurred later. The result of this was a revival of the civic-humanist tradition of librarianship which had prevailed in the years up to 1933. In the German Democratic Republic however, the break was even more radical than simply with everything that could be traced back to National Socialist roots. Here, there was an ideological clash between those people involved with the profession during the period before the rise of the National Socialists, and others who wished to instate a new policy for the libraries, the essential features of which coming from the politico-educational aims of the workers' movement in Germany and Soviet-influenced Socialism. Many of the protagonists of the early rebuilding years, who came out of the struggles as convinced Socialists and Communists, regard the fact that this was seen immediately as a new indoctrination -albeit this time of an anti-fascist, socialist educational orientation- as a sad development. Some resigned, whilst others were relocated to jobs of little significance or chose them themselves. They did not however, wish to lose their ideals.

Despite the GDR, in principal, having better provisions for dealing with the events linked to the National Socialist era, these were insufficient. The fate of German librarians and others who in their struggle were crushed underhand by the Nazi dictatorship, has nevertheless been reported in greater detail, and attempts have been made to trace their identities - even until as late as the 80's, though this has also served an alibi function: a heroic past can make the differences of the present seem more acceptable. Observed in academic circles, some doctoral thesis which have been written in the Institute of Librarianship at the Humboldt University in Berlin highlight this aspect. Unknown library work in German concentration camps, the heroic activities of librarians in the Theresienstadt ghetto, or the disastrous library policy during WWII in Eastern Europe. Even the eventful fate of individual collections during the twelve year rule of the Brownshirts', has been detailed in specialist reference works and publications. Without doubt such stories form part of the complete collection which German unity brings with it.

In the account of the whole of Germany and in discussions, even in Wolfenbiittel in 1988 and 1989, there has been far too little reflection on the activities of those upright librarians who knowingly risked their livelihoods and lives for the basic ideals of their profession. To what extent can this sacrifice be measured? Under the shadow of death a seemingly hopeless struggle against National Socialism, Fascism and war continued, so as to protect the self-esteem which many colleagues did not show after 1933. Work in libraries, as far it was still able to be carried out, was not an end in itself, but rather served the aims of democracy,

peace and social justice. Only on this general basis could its aims be achieved, for there were naturally manifold personal reasons for opposing the barbaric Nazi rule, determined by different conditions and personal convictions, which at times were even contradictory. There were many different forms of opposition, which means that frequently they cannot be classified.

It is however, no coincidence that it was predominantly younger librarians who were involved in active resistance, and almost without exception saw their future in the two large German workers' parties originating from the Weimar Republic's latter years. This can be explained by the period. To accuse them today, now that Socialism has been discredited world-wide of having striven after false ideals and for that reason to deny them the recognition and respect which they deserve, is not only unfounded but also intolerant and deeply ahistorical. As German librarians, we should have more pride in the fact that we can point to their example of active resistance against National Socialism. It proves that between the years of 1933 and 1945 not all librarians simply manoeuvred strategically or conformed with National Socialism, quietly dissociating themselves from colleagues.

Examining even the lives of only five politically engaged people -Philipp Schaeffer, Erich Schroter, Lotte Schleif, Gerhard Hermann and Olga Hallervorden- it is clear how active resistance was organised and expressed.

Philipp Schaeffer (28 December 1894 - 13 May 1943)

Born into a Prussian officers family, Philipp Shaeffer spent his childhood years in Czarist St. Petersburg, where his father worked for the diplomatic service. From school he went to university to study Middle Eastern studies. After his internship during WWI along with his family, Shaeffer moved to Heidelberg where he continued his philological studies and completed his doctoral thesis in 1923. A fellow student was Anna Seghers. In addition to speaking Russian and French, Schaeffer also spoke Sanskrit, Tibetanese, and Chinese. He moved to Berlin in the mid-1920s and in 1927 he found employment with the city library in Berlin-Mitte. Here, he was assigned responsibility for assembling the new adult reading room in the recently opened Brunnenstrasse main library. Thanks to the book collections from the forrner Social Democratic Heimannschen library, it was developed into one of the best organised collections for social sciences in Berlin for which the library even published a catalogue. Schaeffer and his wife, a sculptress, joined the German Communist Party (KPD) together in 1928. During the meetings of Junior German Librarians of Probstzella in 1930 and Halberstadt in 1931, Schaeffer was the leading member of a small group of Communist public librarians who were present. Dismissed from his job as early as 1932 because of his political activity, he took up work as a packer and then proceeded after January the 30th 1933 to undertake illegal work for his party. As a member of the underground movement for the area of Berlin-Brandenburg, Schaeffer was responsible for the editing and distribution of the Roten-SA-Standarte, the "Red Socialist Army Standard", which was aimed at subverting those

in the ranks of the Brownshirts. He also led an illegal group of students at the Berlin University, and in addition also managed to find the time to continue working on his favourite project - a first dictionary for sinologists. Held under arrest for a short period, and then for many months in custody in Moabit, he was released for lack of evidence, only to be later sentenced to five years imprisonment. Released from the Luckau detention centre in 1940, Schaeffer immediately joined one of the most important Nazi resistance movements led by Schulze-Boysen, the Rote Kapelle. In spring 1942 he fell from the third floor of a tenement block while trying to prevent two married Jews from committing suicide, in doing so seriously injuring himself. Arrested by the Nazis, he was brought to Spandau prison only able to walk with difficulty and when assisted. He was charged with high treason. Guinter Weisenbom reporting Schaeffer's final words, describes how, lifting himself up on his crutches he said to the court with pride, 'Gentlemen, you ask me why I failed to report this matter? I can only reply by saying that it is because I am not a henchman for the police.' Just as his companions had been, the 48 year old was sentenced to death. His execution took place on the 13th of May 1943 in Plotzensee: Schaeffer went to the gallows with total composure.

Schaeffer was, according to his circle of young librarians in Berlin, a fascinating personality with an excellent intellect. In library work he saw the possibility of bringing about social change and tried to shift the library's political stance away from its sheltered exclusion and unbinding neutrality, to being active in the daily political struggle. The library in Brunnenstrasse, his former domain, is still standing today and was named after him in 1952.

Erich Schroter (11 July 1894 - 23 December 1965)

Edch Schroter was brought up in the workers' quarters of Berlin. After a technical apprenticeship and working in industry, he became an avid student at the adult education centre in Neukolln and a knowledge-thirsty reader at the city library. The director of the Neukolln city library, Dr. Helene Nathan, interested him in librarian work and obtained for him, from Walter Hofmann, a study place in Leipzig at the City Library School, the final exams for which he took in 1928. Hofmann recognised the excellent organisational skills which Schroter possessed and made him the technical director of his Leipzig Institute for the Science of Reading and Literature without further ado. Helene Nathan however, reclaimed her prodigy in 1929 and employed him as a librarian in Neukolln. It was due to her influence that he joined the German Socialist Party (SPD) in 1930. In 1933 Schroter, then 39 years old, was dismissed from work for being an "active Marxist sympathiser". With the assistance of his former director Helene Nathan, who prior to his dismissal herself had been racially persecuted and driven out of work, he managed to set up a new livelihood. He set up a private lending collection in Charlottenburg which was permitted to lend books to the Jewish community until 1935. Schroter joined the illegal group the Rote Kampfer, "Red Fighters", which campaigned against the Nazis by distributing leaflets and posters. Arrested in 1936 and freed after a tiring period of custody at Alexanderplatz, he was sentenced to six months imprisonment in Tegel and permanent police surveillance thereafter.

At the beginning of 1945 Schroter was already active at the city library in Neukolln, this time as the director and it was from here that he began to rebuild the much devastated public library system in Berlin. In the first post-war municipal authority he assumed the role of consultant for library systems, and after the city's division he became the head consultant for library systems in the Central Management for Adult Education in the GDR. Schroter founded the first specialist publication to be produced again in Germany after WWII -Der Volksbibliothekar, or "The Peoples' Librarian", appearing under Soviet licence from October 1946. He was dismissed from public office in 1951 as a result of a party examination, and it is thought likely that his former membership to the Social Democrats may have played a role here. Even until two years before his death Schroter was working at the Central Institute for Library systems in Berlin, which he co-founded in 1950. As an expert there on library management he had played a decisive role with respect to the setting-up of open shelf libraries in the GDR. Schroter was an active, resourceful, shining rhetorician, and after 1945 an ardent, antifascist democratic propagandist working for library circles. He demonstrated these qualities in his numerous expert contributions to the field, as a lecturer at the Berlin Library School and in powerful round table discussions with West German counterparts.

Elly Lotte Schleif (4 July 1903 - 26 February 1965)

Elly Lotte Schleif came from Berlin-Lichterfelde and her father taught in adult education. She graduated in 1921 as a librarian from the Centre for Librarian studies in Berlin under Paul Ladewig, at the Berlin City Library under Gottlieb Fritz and in addition under Fritz Milkau at the Prussian National Library. She completed her studies in 1925 by taking the Prussian committee diploma exams. She found work as a library assistant at the city library in Stralsund under the authority of Erwin Ackerknecht, reformer of the Stettiner library. Lotte Schleif admired his work greatly and they maintained professional contact throughout their lives. In 1928 the opportunity arose for Lotte Schleif to take on a post for three months as a trainee for libraries in Leipzig. This was therefore a chance for her to learn more about the library work of Walter Hofmann at close proximity. Following this she was employed as second librarian at the regional library of Thuringia in Gera, but was taken in 1930 by Helene Nathan to the lending library of Neukolln, Berlin, where she worked until 1935. She took part in the Young Librarians meetings at Probstzella and Halberstadt.

Influenced by Phillip Schaeffer, Lotte Schleif offered her services to the German Communist Party (KPD) at the age of 29, and after the National Socialists seized power in February 1933 she agreed to undertake illegal activities for the party. Her flat served as quarters for herself, Schaeffer and other illegal persons. She involved herself with the publishing of the Roten-SA-Standarte the "Red Socialist Army Standard", secured storage space for selected Marxist literature, and smuggled secretary Ernst Thalmanns, in addition to other endangered underground leaders over the border into Czechoslovakia. In 1935 Lotte Schleif had to give up her increasingly risky position in Neukolln and moved to the borough of Prenzlauer Berg, where she was able to carry on her work unhindered for the secret front. From the beginning

of the Nazi dictatorship she had been involved with an expert committee which had been working on the preparation of rules for the alphabetical cataloguing within public libraries. The committee was lead by the director of the Berlin city library, Wilhelm Schuster, chairman of the Union of German Librarians which had suffered the policy of forced conformity of the National Socialists. Working with leading members of the field who supported the National Socialists provided an effective means of camouflage for other activities. As the committee work on rules drew to a close in 1937, Lotte Schleif was given the position as director for the borough of Nordmarktplatz, and shortly after she took on the job in the capacity of a civil service library inspector. Her friend and later life-companion Rudolf Bergtel, sentenced to eight years in prison in 1938 for being a Communist Party functionary, managed to escape in 1939 from Aschendorf prison. With the help of the recently sworn-in municipal authorities civil servant he was able to hide at the home of sculptors Kurt and Elizabeth Schumacher. In a dramatic fashion it was later possible for him to be brought to the safety of Switzerland.

At this point in time Lotte Schleif had already begun her conspiratorial activity with the Roten Kapelle. She formed the link between Schulze-Boysen and the resistance movement for Hans Coppi, and was involved with the activities of branched underground movements. On the 18th of February 1942 she was arrested whilst at work in her library. Whilst being held, both in cells at Alexanderplatz and at court cells in Charlottenburg, she was able to deceive her prosecutors. When her case came before the Reichs court, a sentence of eight years imprisonment was imposed, instead of the death penalty which the prosecution had demanded.

Lotte Schleif, now suffering the additional disability of being blind in one eye, spent two years and seven months between the prisons of Cottbus, Jauer and Kleinmeusdorf near Leipzig. It was here that on the recommendation of the "American Officers for Prisons" she was released on the 10th of May 1945. She struggled back to Berlin to find her flat in Wilmersdorf totally destroyed, yet nevertheless in June offered her services towards the process of rebuilding. As a consultant for public and corporate libraries she gave training classes to junior members of staff of the Neukolln library, joined the editorial staff of the Volksbibliothekar, or "The Peoples' Librarian", and then in 1947 began the construction of the Berlin Librarians School, which she directed until 1950 and lectured in from then until 1954. She collaborated with Joachim Haberichter on the alphabetical cataloguing rules, which became compulsory from 1951 in the GDR.

Lotte Bergtel-Schleif was the only librarian expert in Gennany able to maintain a professional career whilst also carrying out illegal resistance activities. In 1946 she wrote an article for the Volksbibliothekar -"The Peoples' Librarian"- on "Work possibilities in the field of public libraries under the National Socialists", and in this she gave an account of her ten years of living a double life, playing a public role in an unfair state against which she bitterly struggled in private. It is the only article written in the post-war period for the specialist press, which has been critical and self-critical about the profession in the National Socialist period and remains so today.

During her imprisonment, Lotte Bergtel-Schleif's health was seriously damaged with the result that soon after her release she was forced to give up her professional work completely. She was a convinced and disciplined Communist, but nevertheless saw the party developments under the leadership of Walter Ulbricht and the ever more powerful group which surrounded him, with increasing concern and growing scepticism and she suffered as a consequence. She became even more bitter when in 1956 a ban was declared on her party throughout the greater German republic. The preliminary proceedings which Schleif and other surviving members of the Roten Kapelle had initiated against the Nazi sympathising chief prosecutor, Dr. Manfred Roeder, were taken on by the state lawyers in Luneburg 1951. The accusation of treason raised once more over the deaths of resistance group members like Philipp Schaeffer lead Lotte Bergtel-Schleif to dissociate herself from such a type of peoples' parliament. Until her death in 1965 she held out hope for Soviet reforms -today we know this to have been illusory.

Dr. Gerhard Hermann (5 February 1901 - 19 September 1946)

Gerhard Hermann was born in Posen, son of a railway land surveyor. He studied Romance languages and Literature in Jena and Munich and received his doctorate in 1925 for a thesis on Voltaire. Active in the city library in Erfurt as a trainee, he became interested in library work. In order to learn the basics of librarianship thoroughly, he took a position as an academic assistant to Erwin Ackerknecht in the city library of Stettin, where together with Rudolf Joerden he obtained the necessary specialist qualifications in 1927. On moving to Berlin, a city with stark social tensions, he consequently felt immediately compelled to join the German Social Democrats (SPD). Working at first in Spandau with Max Wieser, and then in Treptow, he also maintained contact with the author and colleague Hermann Stresau. In 1932 he applied for entry into the civil service with a view to obtaining the position of City Library Advisor in Friedrichshain -which he succeeded in doing early the next year. He was denounced by a group of library employees as a result of his rejection of National Socialism and three months later had to answer again to further questions from Nazi officials. He was relieved of his duties and then finally in October 1933 dismissed without notice. Successive personal threats finally lead Hermann before the year was out, to emigrate to Prague. Here, he and his family sought an existence from work for radio and press. His knowledge of foreign languages served him well: he spoke French, Italian, Spanish, Romanian and English, and shortly after his arrival Czech too. Hermann's academic journalism in Moldaustadt, in addition to a book which he had published there on a philological topic, served an anti-fascist purpose. As a free author living in exile he received support from both the Thomas Mann Society and his writing.

After the Nazis' invasion of Czechoslovakia, this modest livelihood was once again threatened. He survived his first interrogation by the Gestapo only by crafty deception, his ties with illegal groups surfaced however, as a result of traitors. He was arrested in July 1941 and in April 1942 sentenced by a special court at the German district court in Prague. The original sentence of two years imprisonment was increased to four, and his wife was imprisoned also.

As a prisoner in a labour camp near Coswig he suffered severe physical ailments which were so bad that he had to be transferred to the prison hospital at Berlin-Moabit. In 1943 he was transferred to the Nazi regime's most modern and secure prison in Brandenburg-Görden. The successful resistance organisation -which centred on the library- took him on as an odd-job man. For Hermann, being accepted into a circle of politically like-minded people was a relief and the small amount of freedom which this offered him he used to learn Russian.

Freed in April 1945 he moved back to the devastated city of Berlin. He too offered his services towards the democratic rebuilding, and immediately took on the position of consultant for the academic libraries and archives in the Adult Education Centre of the Municipal Authorities. Here, he was responsible for the reorganisation of library conditions in the National Library, the City Library and the City Archives: the Town Hall Library came directly under his control. Under his directorship until the middle of 1946, more than a million books were recovered from the city's ruins. Together with Erich Schroter and Lotte Bergtel-Schleif, Gerhard Hermann was able to bring the library system of the old Reich's capital into line with the legal stipulations of the occupying forces. At this point the afflictions which Hermann had incurred during his term in prison showed themselves to be irreparable, and forced the upright anti-fascist and strong opponent of Hitler into a sanatorium in September 1946, where he died at the age of 45.

Olga Hallervorden (11 July 1898 - 14 December 1978)

Olga Hallervorden was born in Königsberg, Prussia. Her father was a successful practising neurologist and involved with the German Socialist Party (SPD). From an early age he encouraged her to take part in the Youth Workers Movement, and entering into the Socialist Student Alliance after grammar school, a related group, appeared to her to be an almost logical progression. At university she studied French and English and graduated from the National and University Library of Königsberg, and in addition with the city library's own traineeship. In 1922 she passed the Prussian committee diploma exams in Berlin. On moving to the capital, the first chance which she had for proving her abilities was with the publishing house Julius Springer in the Kaiserin-Auguste-Viktoria-House, and also in the Reichs Office for Statistics. It was during this turbulent period in the metropolis that she met a companion for life, the Yugoslavian Oto Bihalji-Merin, who later became an art historian, and under whose influence she joined the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1925. She was a student under Hermann Duncker and Frida Rubiner at the Marxist Workers School (MASCH) and was commissioned by her party to write a report for the Soviet Union on "Female workers in Germany". After six months working at the public library in Wilmersdorf she obtained, in 1927, the position of library head secretary of the borough office. Hallervorden went on to spend the next five years managing the Borough Office Library.

As a member of the German Alliance of Civil Servants she had to conceal her work for the Alliance of Proletarian Revolutionary Writers, founded in 1928 by Johannes R. Becher, Anna Seghers and Ludwig Renn. It was for this reason that her contributions to the Alliance's publication, 'Left Curve', were printed under the pseudonym of Anna Loos.

In early 1933 Olga Hallervorden was dismissed for having "attitudes hostile to the state". In order to be officially recognised in Denmark as an emigrant, she entered into a fictitious marriage with a Danish railway employee. Secretly working as the secretary for emigration for the German Communist Party (KPD) she worked closely together with the worker-author Martin Andersen Nexø, who had taken on the chair of a Danish support group. Hermann Duncker worker and functionary, admired greatly by Hallervorden, had emigrated to Denmark in 1936 and was able to act as an advisor to her. In July 1937 she registered her services for the medical corps of the International Brigade, and travelled with her new companion Andreas Ewert to take part in fighting fascism in the Spanish Civil War. Her superior was Wilhelm Grundelach, who had been sent by the International Red Cross to Spain. He later became party executive of the German Communist Party (KPD) and a Member of the House of Representatives in the first Federal German Parliament of 1949. After two years of a futile campaign on Spanish soil Hallervorden, librarian and medical corps member, along with her companions was interned in 1939. Hallervorden and 300 other opponents of the Hitler and Franco regimes were interned for two years at the camp in Rieucros. After France's defeat she continually faced the threat of being extradited to Germany. Only after the actions of the emigration organisations and with the aid of anti-fascist support groups was she able to obtain a life-saving visa for Mexico. The planned journey started from a bordello in Marseilles, it ended abruptly however, in Casablanca where the refugees were sent to a Moroccan concentration camp. Only months later were Olga Hallervorden and fellow-sufferers, amongst which were Andreas Ewert and Walter Janka able to continue their adventurous journey aboard an over-laden, unseaworthy ship to Vera Cruz, via Lisbon and Cuba. The German emigrants in Mexico, amongst which were also Bodo Uhse, Anna Seghers, Egon Erwin Kirsch, Ludwig Renn, Paul Merker and Alexander Abusch, joined up with the organisation 'Free Germany', which had been formed in 1942 and represented an important centre of resistance against fascism, which had also become the world's enemy. Olga Hallervorden was secretary of the Women's Committee for the Emigration Organisation, which was chaired by Anna Seghers. She worked for the 'Free Germany' publication, dedicating herself primarily to the task of translating from Spanish, English and Danish. That authors such as Constanza de la Mora, Howard Fast and Hans Scheff were published in German is thanks to the work of Hallervorden.

Only after nearly twenty years of exile was Olga Hallervorden able to return via Italy, Austria and Czechoslovakia to her homeland. It seemed only second nature for her to join the ranks of anti-fascist companions in East Germany. For this reason she registered hopefully with the GDR authorities. At the time the political climate regarding emigrants from the West had become rough and unfriendly. A show trial was organised for the leader of the organisation

for emigration to Mexico, Paul Merker. Alexander Abusch and others had already fallen out of favour with the power-wielding, ex-Muscovite Walter Ulbricht and Hermann Matern. The returning couple found humble accommodation but after their divorce in 1954, and perhaps as a consequence of it, had to make do with subordinate positions thereafter. Only when the Soviet Union relaxed during the Khrushchev era could Olga Ewert-Hallervorden obtain employment. She was the director of the recruitment department of the trade union school at Bernau. The social sciences archive which had been set up in 1960 after the death of Hermann Duncker her former teacher, was a special college collection for which she was responsible. After her retirement from the profession in 1964 she spoke in great detail of this in an article in the specialist publication *Bibliothekar* - 'Librarian'. Her death in 1978 was for the most part unnoticed.

The five political lives which have been outlined above may still serve as examples for us regarding the duties and obligations which we have. They show clearly the wide spectrum of resistance which there was against National Socialism into the ranks of which some German librarians consciously included themselves. It would be unfair to deny their upright struggle the respect and recognition due simply because they were 'lefties' and supported Socialist ideals. Moreover, this can only be seen as lacking awareness of history and as conservative ignorance.

Erwin Marks

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The Morning Star on ISC

This twice-yearly publication is a must for anyone interested in contemporary questions of censorship, freedom and ethics. Launched at the LINK conference in December 1994, the latest edition has just appeared and is designed for library and information workers seeking alternatives to "the dominant paradigms" of their field of work. But there is something here for almost everyone. Contributions from around the world, including *The Struggle For Information In South Africa* by Christopher Merrett, *Pittsburg Students Protest Censorship* by Selva Nebbia and *Festival of Rights* by Paul Donovan, give some idea of the range of articles. The Morning Star's role is readily recognised both in the editorial comment and in an article *A Star That Never Sets : The Early Years Of The Morning Star Co-operative* - reproduced from it. Of particular value to those in the business was *The News that Doesn't Make the News: Sources for Alternative Current Affairs Reporting*, giving a most tempting breakdown of journals which specialise in analysing and decoding the mass media.

Towards a Redefinition of Radical Information Work

There are many varied definitions regarding what makes for good Librarianship and Information Work, but most of these definitions serve just to confuse the lay-person or non-expert.

Information work should not be about making complex systems, but in helping to clarify the data or information that the user requires. Even with the universall used Dewey classification system, most people do not understand it, even though it is in use throughout the globe (1).

For the information seeker the problem is a complex one. They might know what they are looking at, but still not understand it. Take an example : With a graph you might know the parameters described, but being inexperienced at reading statistics, not understand what the graph represents. Yet with the right footnotes, explanation notes regarding the parameters, and a well designed graphic lay out, the same data should be very easily assimilated.

My thesis is simple, that in order to be better information workers, we have to be communicators. We should therefore concern ourselves with such things as typography, graphic design, the way in which databases are constructed, translations (both of languages and technical words), a knowledge of postal codes, phone codes, transport timetables, stock market reports, archives, filing systems, and of course, books (2). This is not just so that we might be better information workers, but radical information workers too.

Perhaps I should here state that my observations and ideas are based upon the experience of not just working in libraries and the information field since 1972. It is also rooted in 28 years of Peace Movement activities, the last 11 years as a volunteer in the nternational secretariat of the War Resisters International (WRI). Much of this experience has been in what might be called organising, be it either in campaigning or office management terms. The point being, that I base my analysis of what we as information workers should be practising, from having had to deal with end-user needs, rather than from the academics more theoretical perspective.

Aside from being an information provider, I am also an information user. These notes and observations are the result of doing and observing, rather than from planning and theorising. I am not an academic and, in my view, those who can't teach become managers (3)

The Problem

Perhaps I should start by looking at the way in which the use of information has changed within the last decade, or rather some of the problems that are increasingly being experienced by information workers. These can be best summed up as a series of brief statements :

* information is a commodity (4)

* adult literacy is on the increase (5)

* the "professionalisation" of the librarian and information worker, who takes academic standards as the only standard, has created a gap in understanding for the end-user. We are no longer people whose job it is to help the end-user to access what they require in information terms ; instead we are increasingly becoming the barriers to accessing information.

* the technology itself is creating / has created a society of people who are either information rich or information poor.

* the number of companies that sell information, be it as providers, publishers, or "Communications Corporations" seems to grow by the year. One has only to look in the financial pages of the press to see how this relates to a lot of money being made.

Of course all of these above mentioned points have been spelt out before. I am not voicing anything that is new, except in the way in which I regard the increasing 'Professionalism' of the industry as a barrier. It is all very well talking about standards, or building nicely exact (but complex) classification systems that only the professional can use, but here lies the problem. Surely it is our job to make access to information easier for the end-user, and not the other way round. This also applies to the very language that we use too.

There are also other concerns that I have, and which reflect the very way in which the technology itself has shaped the way that we view the message, and made the medium all important ; it is the effects of viewing screens or listening to telephones, but not reading which I refer to. I should perhaps illustrate this by a few examples.

* The increasing number of advertisements that give just a telephone, fax or E-mail numbers, rather than an address that one can write to. The BBC is just as guilty of this too, as this is the way that listeners are asked to respond, rather than to communicate by post.

* The use of answering machines with messages that the receiver will get back to the caller.... Just you try and ask for the reply to be by post, and you will soon learn what it is to be ignored.

* The use of mobile telephones, which are expensive to use, and one of the curses of the modern age (we all have bad stories to tell about them).

Television

Perhaps the worst aspect of how the medium has changed our culture is television. Call me an eccentric, but I do not own or wish to own a television. Yet it is amazing just how many people think I should have one, as though it were a life-threatening matter not to have one. The result has been that I have turned down the offer of more television sets than I care to count. What really annoys me is the assumption that I am "missing out" on something by not having such a machine, as though I could somehow not be able to occupy my time without one. Yet I would question the value of receiving what television has to offer, as much of it is in the form of repeats, or of no more than time-wasting entertainment value. What ever happened to creativity or entertaining oneself?

The worst aspect of television is the way in which it has permeated our culture. At 47 years old I don't think that I should automatically be expected to know what the latest pop music is, or learnedly be able to talk about such activities as clubbing, or other aspects of youth culture. Yet a very high percentage of the population think that a knowledge about what is on television constitutes "a very basic general knowledge", even though the very same people might not be able to tell one much about the history or geography of their own locality, and might have a very limited knowledge of the world. The really sad thing is that, aside from repeats, much of what is on television will be known to the self-educated individual through either newspapers, literature, periodicals, or by listening to the radio. All else on television (quiz shows and all) is no more than dross.

Yet it is not to rave against the machine that I wish to do in this article, but to look at the effects that such media have with regards to the presentation of information. One has only to pick up a copy of the Star or Daily Mirror to see the effect that television has had upon so-called newspapers. News has become entertainment, and entertainment is the news. Even the so-called quality broadsheets are not immune from this effect.

Another way of Viewing Ideas

Thus I come to the main thrust of my concerns and argument. Namely, that if we as information workers are going to be able to do our job effectively, then we should be as much concerned about the presentation of information, as the information content itself. Thus I would argue that we should be interested in looking at graphics, lay-out, typography and type size. Aspects of translation work and making our communications easily available for translation are as important too (6). These comments might sound like sweeping statements, yet from my experiences I can show some of the reasons why I have come to these conclusions.

Towards a radical view of Information by Radical Information Workers

Many radicals bemoan the fact that 'radical' or 'alternative' viewpoints (or journals) do not get the coverage or distribution that they deserve to achieve. Yet should we be surprised about this situation, when we are so good at polemics, and bad at putting over our points of view? During 1989 I worked as a temp in the research department at the Economist Newspaper. During my time at the paper I learnt one major lesson, based upon the most basic rule that the papers operate upon. i.e. If any facts or statistics are given within the paper, then they must be verified as accurate. In other words, it might be possible to disagree with any opinion that might be printed within the Economist, but if the paper states something as being a fact, then it is an accurate and verified fact. I wonder how many radical periodicals I could make a similar statement about? It is all very well to be able to give a coherent or 'politically right-on' view of the world, but if the facts that one argues upon are flawed, then there are going to be a lot of people that will take no heed of ones argument as a result.

Spelling It out

One would think that the object of writing something down is to communicate either ideas or information but, from what I have seen over the years, I start to wonder if some writers have this in mind? I am not talking about grammar or spelling but the set of assumptions that many authors seem to hold. This comes down to a question of translating abbreviations, explaining legal points, and making sure that presumptions are not being made. I'll give a few examples. but most of what I have to say about this issue comes from the fact that people write from within their own culture IE they do not consider that their work might be read by a person who lives in another country and might not get the cultural references that they hold. A good example being that Arthur Daley (7) is not known outside of the U.K.

Humour can also present a lot of problems to the interceptor and information worker. Many jokes are based upon a previous experience or shared knowledge. The Monty Python Piranha brothers sketch being a good example, because although it is viewed as humorous outside of Britain, only if one knows of the Kray Twins does the biting satire in it become obvious (8). Even the humour and word-play within Tintin and Asterix cartoon books changes depending upon which language it is printed in. I can think of countless other examples, but as humour can present problems to anyone doing international work, for most purposes it is best avoided.

I was once reading a document about a change of law effecting Danish Folk High Schools. This was a document that looked at the various effects that the new law would have. I could understand the words that I was reading, but did not understand the document. The reason being that the author presumed that one would know something about the old laws effecting High Schools, and about Danish law too. I have also had similar experiences while looking at documents where abbreviations for organizations have been used, without the full name of the

body being spelt out. Even then, if an organisation is mentioned, it might still be necessary to give a brief description about the organisation and its aims.

Here is another example of not spelling things out, which shows just how making a presumption about knowing something can make the information meaningless. On one occasion, while in Denmark, I was shown a slide show about the ecological aspects of a forest within the country. There was a map of a forest and the surrounding area. Unfortunately the map did not have any scale marked upon it, nor was there any indication of how far the forest was from the nearest large (and well known) town. As a result of this lack of information, I was unable to really appreciate the data that was presented to me.

Perhaps the worst aspect of making presumptions about the information we might have, comes as a result of not noting name changes. For example, in books about World War Two we might read about the siege of Stalingrad, but in contemporary maps you will not see the town named (9).

Talking of maps and names, I could give some funny stories about how renaming street names can create problems. Take Mandela Street in Camden Town, named after Nelson Mandela, which previously had the name of a British regiment that fought in the Boer war, while before that it was known as Little Camden Street. Or you could take the example of Grimaldi Street Kings Cross, which used to be George Street, and is now no longer in existence as it has been absorbed within the Priory Green Estate (10).

Within Eastern Europe the problem is even worse. I can recall buying a town map in Romania which had only the old (communist) street names on it, while all of the streets had been renamed after the revolution of 1989.

My point is simple. Living within an area we can absorb name changes, but unless street maps and directories have references to the old street names, then other people might find that they have some difficulties. Map makers and directory compilers take note !

Seeing Is Understanding

How we see the world can define the way in which we take in information, or understand what we see. This is something that graphic designers might understand, but many librarians and information workers do not. Thus a lot of attention has always been paid to text within the library and information world, but not the visual impact that it might have. What we should always keep in mind, is that the way in which things are visually presented can, and does, have an impact upon how that information is perceived and subsequently understood.

Older readers will remember the way in which news used to be presented to us in the more intellectual 'broadsheet' newspapers. What tended to put a lot of people off reading these

papers was that they found it difficult to tackle a mass of type, even though they understood what was printed. Most people tend to process information in small blocks rather than in one large block. I would argue that it is as important to ease the eye for the visual perception of information, as it is to concentrate upon the information itself. In other words, we as information workers should pay a lot more attention to graphics than we at present tend to do.

It would be very easy for me to give an account of what makes for good visual presentation, but maybe an example might be better. A piece of printing in an unusual (Eg Gothic) or small type face (Eg 8 point) can be difficult to read. Remember : a clear bold type-face can aid the understanding of information content.

We might be working within a world in which the message is audio visual, but even then a clarity of presentation should not be forgotten (11)

To give another example : it always amazes me how in newspapers so much space can be devoted to telling people what is on the television, yet when it comes to the radio listings, a magnifying glass is required.

What I am trying to say is that a knowledge of graphics and typography is something that every information worker should possess, even if they might not have the 'artistic talent' to take on such graphic design work (12).

Likewise, the use of symbols and signs should be looked at as a form of information too, and not just as an aspect of the graphic designers remit. Symbols such as TM are not what we should be about. Instead we should be looking at graphics that explain and enlighten, rather than obscure and confuse, or just make money for the few.

Classification is not mystification

A few years ago I realised that the world of information workers is made up of 'scanners' and 'proof-readers'. The 'proof-readers' worry about 'correct' spelling and grammar, the exact nuances of getting classification points correct, and so forth. The 'scanner', on the other hand, looks at the over-view, and worries more about the information content - rather than the details of presentation.

Both of these types are needed within the information world, but it must be remembered that the end-user is whom we are working for. The end-user may be highly educated and able to deal with or need the exact nuances of classification, but most end-users are not academics and need the simplified methods of presentation which are available.

For example, we should be able to give an exact classification number in our work, but the end-user might find anything over a four digit number just too complex to comprehend. The

current decline in both literacy and educational standards has also had some other specific effects. Thus as librarians we might have to say something like "..... end bay, third shelf down , to the left, stop", rather than give a classification number to the end-user. This all goes to illustrate just how much layout and information content should be regarded as of equal importance.

I would maintain that information and bibliographical work is as much of an art form, as it is a science.

What applies to the information worker and librarian can and does also apply to other forms of information activity as well. My list would include cartographers, post office workers, and timetable compilers. Just look at a map, any post office directory, or the railway timetable, and you will see what I mean.

In Summary

We should never forget that the message is the important thing and our job as information workers is to aid the messenger. As radical information workers, while we should always make sure that the correct information is being given, there are other concerns that we should also take into account. Making sure that the information is catalogued or listed is only one part of our job. We should also make sure that the information is presented in the right language and format as well.

Martyn Lowe

References

- (1) There are many local variants of the Universal Dewey Classification system.
- (2) A good working knowledge of telephone and post / zip codes is very important in terms of International work. The Housmans Peace Directory being a fine example of such a directory (available from 5 Caledonian Road, London N1).
- (3) And that really is being very polite about managers and management ideas.
- (4) To take just a few examples of this intellectual property phenomena
- (5) Don't just take my word - go look at the figures for yourself or better still look at a tabloid newspaper
- (6) Editors and proof readers take note

- (7) A 'loveable' television character that is a byword for corrupt trading.
- (8) The infamous Kray Twins were particularly vicious criminals that operated during the 1960's
- (9) Now there is a good example of the kind of reference book that some of us could use - one that give the old and new names of cities, towns, and countries.
- (10) Grimaldi was a famous clown during the last century who performed within Islington and and he was a key figure within the history of the Circus.
- (11) See : McLuchan, Marshall, *The Medium is the Message*, Penguin Books, London, 1967.
- (12) See : Hollis, Richard, *Graphic design - a Concise History*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1994.

The American Periodical 'Upper and lower case' which described itself as "the International Journal of Graphic Design and Digital Media" is also worth reading within this context..

Public Library Journal on ISC

It is always good to see the appearance of a new journal that challenges the majority viewpoint (they used to be called the 'alternative press' but even that identity is denied in today's babel). It is right that our own profession should be 'promoting alternatives to mainstream library and information provision', providing a 'forum for the exchange of radical views on library and information issues' and challenging 'the dominant paradigms of library and information work' (aims of the journal p. 34). The editing and production of each issue is to change. That is a good idea and should ensure that the journal does not become a victim of one paradigm of its own. How does it work out ? Tales of librarians' control masquerading as a response to defacement by patrons, the library equivalent of tomb robbing as a public library's rare books are sold off, a call for an alternative conference on Cuba, and the illusion of emerging democracy amid the civil wars, corruption and violence of the African continent. (nothing on Britain - yet). There is some meat here, but it lacks focus. The almost inevitable polemic, contrary facts and anecdote require also the rigour that should underpin any work from a profession that stands for the power of information in a manipulative world. Librarians would be advised not to attempt yet one more view of the world. A model to follow is the report of the still much missed Counter Information Services of London. Information is the process of social change, not simply a commodity within it. The issue now is not so much as who controls information, but the enormity of the task facing anyone who wants to know anything. There is so much to know, and so many sources of information to use, that it is too easy to pick the first to hand. Will libraries display this journal?

Fellow Travellers

Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 8 Cynthia Street, London, NI 9JF, Telephone 0171 278 4430

The UK's leading pressure group working for a genuinely free and democratic media. The Campaign produces a newsletter ("Free Press") and advocates the replacement of the Press Complaints Commission and the Broadcasting Complaints Commission with a statutory based Media Commission with the power to enforce the Right of Reply

Friends of the Peace Museum, 20 The Drive, Hertford, SG14 3DF

This organisation wishes to establish a Museum for Peace which will display in a stimulating manner the history and artefacts of the inspiring struggle of the anti war movement. It will promote the vision and practice of non violent conflict management and resolution. It will seek to portray humanity's search for peace and reflect that spirit of peace in which we all hope to build the future.

George Padmore Institute, 76 Stroud Green Road, London, N4 3EN, Tel 0171 272 4889

The George Padmore Institute is the name of the New Beacon Educational Trust library, educational resource and research centre. George Padmore was a leading member of the Pan African Movement and his books include "Pan Africanism or Communism" and "Africa and World Peace". The aim of the Trust is the advancement of the public in matters relating to the political, social and cultural history of persons in the UK of Caribbean, African and Asian descent. The Institute has an extensive collection of books on this subject and a collection of over 100 journals.

GreenNet, 23 Bevenden St, London, NI 6BH

GreenNet is a global computer communications network for the environment, peace, human rights and development. "Information is power. Much of the information revolution grew in the womb of the military and the multinationals. It is time to take it into the hands and homes of the people and to make it very accessible to those working to improve the world. GreenNet deserves to succeed" (Peter Gabriel).

Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA), 4th Floor Sable Centre, 41 De Korte Street, Braamfontein 2001, Johannesburg, South Africa

IFAA was established in 1986 in response to the all encompassing African crisis. IFAA is a network institute for policy research on Alternative Strategies for the continent with links to NGOs and grassroots organisations.

J.D.Bernal Peace Collection, the Marx Memorial Library, Clerkenwell Green, London

A library collection devoted to peace and disarmament : books, pamphlets, periodicals, documents, official statements, conference reports, photographs and press cuttings from all over the world. Subjects covered include struggles for national liberation and anti war movements.

Labour Action for Peace, 3 7 Hollingworth Road, Orpington, Kent, BR5 1 AQ, Telephone 0181 467 5367

An organisation of Labour Party members working for peace, socialism and disarmament and seeking to keep these issues to the forefront of Labour Party Policy. LAP publishes a regular newsletter and organises conferences and fringe meetings at labour movement events.

Latin America Information Centre, PO Box 24, Manchester, M7 0EX

LAIC provides a news service (comprehensive coverage of all countries in the region) , research facilities (via an extensive library covering current affairs in Latin America) ; travel information and budget flights ; goods for sale (crafts, books, maps and other publications).

EIDOS on ISC

Information For Social Change is an activist organization that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers. It is committed to promoting alternatives to the dominant paradigms of library and information work and publishes its own journal "Information For Social Change" (ISC). This edition of ISC "looks at censorship and freedom of information which are both sides of the same coin." The keynote article is by Chris Atton, entitled "The news that doesn't make the news: sources for alternative current affairs reporting.....". The article includes a complete listing of references, and alternative resources (periodicals, books, pamphlets, publishers) that are mentioned in the text. It is an excerpt from a chapter in Atton's new book *Alternative Literature: A Practical Guide For Librarians*, Gower, 1996. Other important articles include: "The Struggle For Information in South Africa", which asserts that "the government has no commitment to the concept..." ; "A Star That Never Sets : The Early Years of the Morning Star Cooperative" which advocates "...defeating the Tories and electing a Labour government committed to a shift of wealth and power in favour of working people." ; "Pittsburgh Students Protest Censorship" by protesting Carnegie Mellons University's decision to ban students from gaining access to certain Internet news groups that contain materials school officials deemed pornographic ; a report on Liberty's "Festival of Rights" conference, which covered a plethora of human rights issues "Some Recent Alternative Publications" ; "A Riot To Read" (another annotated listing of still more sources of alternative perspectives on intellectual/personal freedom, censorship threats, etc.) Very Highly Recommended.

A Riot to Read

Directory of Progressive Librarians Around the World, edited by Raimund Dehmlow, Laurentius Publications, Hannover, 1997, ISBN 3931614980

This Directory includes organisations, individuals and projects in nine countries with equal or different kinds of interests. ISC's Martyn Lowe did a lot of the research into these "critical" and "alternative" groups. The Directory lists several organisations that ISC is already networking with : KRIBIBI in Austria ; AKRIBIE in Germany ; LIWO in South Africa ; LINK in the UK ; and the Progressive Librarians Guild in the USA.

In each case a contact name and address is given, followed by a description of what each group is about and any publications that they produce. Raimund would like to hear from you if you know of any other individuals or organisations that should be included in future editions of this Directory. The plan is to publish a second edition in 1998. A site on the Internet is also being established which will include this Directory. Contact Raimund at Kirchroeder Str. 44H, D-30625, Hannover.

Counterpoise, edited by Charles Willett, Alternatives in Print Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association, USA, 1997, ISSN 10920714

An interview with Charles Willett about Counterpoise appeared in ISC 4. I'm happy to say that everything Charles promised has been delivered in this Volume 1, Number 1, dated January 1997. The journal has an impressive list of Associate Editors which includes Christopher Atton from the UK and Sanford Berman.

This well produced issue of 68 pages has a striking cover and six main sections. In his editor's notes, Charles Willett describes the purpose of Counterpoise, which is to "describe, criticise, defend and promote" the alternative press. There are a number of features and essays which include a piece about the indigenous press of Australia and an independent (music) label profile.

The bulk of the publication is taken up with reviews of alternative resources, both print (reference, books, pamphlets, magazines) and non - print (videos, CD-ROM). Here you will find 121 reviews including Berman and Danky's Alternative library literature and Atton's Alternative literature : a practical guide for librarians. All of the publications mentioned in the text are indexed by publisher, author / title and subject. To contribute or subscribe write to 1716 SW Williston Rd, Gainesville, FL 32608-4049, USA.

Some Practical Projects

With this issue we start a new series on the practical problems of information work that are faced within campaigning bodies. Unlike within big organisations and libraries, campaign groups tend to have very specific needs, both in the way that they collate their information, and in how they organise their filing systems. If the structure of the organisation is in any way complex, then the best way to sort out their information is by creating their own data base cross-reference system.

An example problem

The International Office of the Peace Brigades Internationals' International Office recently created such a data base system, which had to both hold references to the origin of the information, its national bodies, committees, project offices etc., plus human rights and situations within the countries that it operates inside. The codes used also give a reference to the place within the office system that the information is stored. Given that a file or document held by the organisation might have references to any of the above matters, then it was held to be important that the data base should be coded to show any of the above items mentioned, and be very easy for any non-information worker to use. What follows is a description of the structure of the organisation and the data-base cross-reference system that was created.

Peace Brigades International (PBI)

PBI sends unarmed peace teams, on request, into areas of violent conflict. These teams aim to provide a non-partisan Non-violent presence, so that work towards peace and social justice might occur.

PBI has provided teams in Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Columbia, North America, Central America and a new one to Haiti. Each of these projects has its own project co-ordinating office. It is also involved in a joint project, The Balkans Peace Team, together with the War Resisters International. PBI also has national bodies within such countries as France, Italy, The Netherlands, Britain, Germany, Canada, and State of Spain. It also has a number of its own internal committees and international co-ordinating structures. Clearly, as you might imagine, cross referencing the information that comes into the office from such a complex structure could be something of a problem to organise.

The solution to this complex structure on a data-base, has been to build codes that use recognised (international) abbreviations, and others that are used within the organisation. The most important aspect of the codes used is that they provide an easily understood cross reference to both subject (issues) and where the material originated. For more information contact: Peace Brigades International, 5 Caledonian Road, London N.1.